

Revelation Chapter 10

Verses 10:1 – 11:14: These verses serve as an interlude between the sixth trumpet and seventh trumpet (11:15). The seals and the bowls also have a brief interlude between their sixth and seventh judgments (7:1-17; 16:15). God's intention is to encourage and comfort His people in the midst of the fury and to remind them that He is still sovereign, that He remembers His people, and that they will ultimately be victorious.

Revelation 10:1 "And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow [was] upon his head, and his face [was] as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:"

Chapter 10 begins with another parenthesis in the chronology of Revelation (10:1 – 11:14). These visions apparently relate to the time period covered by the first six trumpets, and thus to the latter half of the Tribulation. The "mighty angel" may be a strong angel, or even Christ Himself (the Angel of the Lord). The description is similar to that of Christ (in 1:13-16; compare Ezek. chapter 1). The "cloud" (compare Psalm 104:3), the "rainbow" (compare Rev. 4:3), the "sun" (compare 1:16), and the "pillars of fire" (compare Exodus 13:21), may refer to deity, but a parallel may also be drawn with the angel Gabriel (compare Dan. 8:16; 12:7).

In this, we must remember that John is having a dream or a vision. God appears sometimes in visions and dreams in some other way than His Godhead. Being "clothed in a cloud", shows the royalty of this being.

"Another mighty angel": Many commentators understand this to be Jesus Christ. But the Greek word translated "another", means one of the same kind, that is a created being. This is not one of the 7 angels responsible for sounding the trumpets (8:2), but one of the highest ranking in heaven, filled with splendor, greatness, and strength (compare 5:2; 8:3; 18:1).

At no other time does Christ appear as an angel or created being after His resurrection. This angel is most likely Michael, Gabriel, or an angel equal to them who swears an oath by Jesus Christ, indicating something significant is about to happen. Angels play a prominent role in the Apocalypse, being mentioned sixty-six times.

A "rainbow ... upon his head" reminds us of the covenant of God with man. This covenant has been fulfilled through Jesus (see note on 4:3). Perhaps God included this to remind John, that even in judgment, He will always remember His Noahic Covenant and protect His own.

"Feet as pillars of fire": This angel's feet and legs indicate the firm resolve with which he will execute the Day of the Lord.

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Verses 2-4: The “little book” is probably a title deed to the earth (compare Jer. 32:10-11). It symbolizes Christ’s right to possess and rule the earth (compare Psalm 2:6-9). The planting of the feet on the “sea” and of His promised inheritance as Messiah. The “loud voice” shows authority as well. The little book may also contain more judgments (compare Ezek. 2:8 – 3:3). The “seven thunders” or peals of thunder may be further messages of judgment, such as the seven bowl judgments still to come (chapter 16). He is here told to “seal” them up, since they will be described in detail later.

Revelation 10:2 "And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and [his] left [foot] on the earth,"

“Little book”: The 7 sealed scroll that is the title deed to the earth (see note on 5:1), will be fully opened and all the final judgments made visible.

The "Little Book" that was seen in heaven (in verse 2), has a similar mission as that given to (Ezekiel 3:1-3 and Jeremiah 15:16). The prophetic Word, which is what the "Little Book" is, contains the "sweet" message of God's wonderful plan for mankind including the coming of Christ, the Millennium Kingdom, and Heaven, but it also contains the Judgment of God on sinners who do not repent and come to Him, and their ultimate consignment to hell.

Just the fact that it is opened tells us that it is to be revealed to those who will consume it. As believers, we are told to eat this book, just as John was told to eat it. This "little book", I believe, is the Word of God, the Bible.

The Bible (Word) is alive. When we eat the Bible, it gives us the strength to live victorious lives before Him. Jesus is in dominion over everything. He is our source of power. Studying the Bible is more important to our life than our daily bread. Praise God, the Bible is of no private interpretation. God the Holy Spirit will teach each of us what the Bible is saying to us.

The planting of the feet on the sea and the earth (dry land), shows Christ's authority over the earth in its entirety, and the appropriation of His promised inheritance as Messiah.

Revelation 10:3 "And cried with a loud voice, as [when] a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices."

The lion is the monarch of the woods, and his roar is an image of terror. The point of the comparison here seems to be the loudness with which the angel cried, and the power of what he said to awe the world, as the roar of the lion keeps the dwellers of the forest in awe. What he said is not stated; nor did John attempt to record it

“As when a lion roareth; loud and terrible; and indeed, it was the voice of the lion of the tribe of Judah, which was heard far and near, throughout the whole world, by his people, and is terrible to his enemies.

“And when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices”: Interpreters judge these seven thunders to signify those judgments of God which should be executed in the world upon the sounding of the seventh trumpet.

This again, is a repetition of the idea contained in the preceding clause. The Jews were accustomed to call thunder the seven voices, and to regard it as the voice of the Lord (compare the sevenfold "voice of the Lord"; Psalm 29:1-11). In the same way that they regarded lightning as the fire of God (Job 1:16).

Revelation 10:4 "And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not".

It seems that John was attempting to write down everything as he saw it. This little book is not for the world to see. That is why Jesus spoke in parables. Only the believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are supposed to understand what is in the Book, and then only through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and Bible study. This message then from these voices is not for the world in general. Jesus, or God the Father, stops John from revealing these things by telling him not to write this down.

Thundering voices must come either from God or something very near Him. The voices that sound like seven thunders are a unique feature in the book of Revelation. John is prepared to write down what these thunder like voices say when he hears another voice telling him to "seal up and not write down what he heard".

This is the only proclamation in the entire book of Revelation that is sealed up. As for the seventh angel, the mystery of God should be finished I believe when the 7th coming vial judgment trumpet is sounded, is what is being referred to here.

Both Daniel and John were instructed to seal up much of what they saw, reserving the interpretation for the generation to whom it would be obvious: "I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying, "seal up the things which the seven peals of thunder have spoken, and do not write them." And then, "But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase."

It should be apparent to even the most casual of readers that this is the generation in which knowledge has increased to the level necessary to understand the differences between symbols and substance. This is the generation in which many will experience John's eyewitness testimony, to their everlasting regret! This is the Generation of End Times.

Verses 5-7: Lifting the “hand” signifies taking an oath (compare Gen. 14:22-23; Dan. 12:7). The announcement of the “angel” is that there will be no more delay in the establishment of the millennial kingdom of Christ. This presumes a present delay or postponement of the promised kingdom (between Christ’s two advents). With the sounding of the “seventh” trumpet (11:15),

the present “mystery” form of the kingdom will be over (compare Rom. 11:25), and what God promised to the “prophets” (e.g., Isa. chapter 11, Jer. chapter 31; Ezek. chapters 36 and 37; Dan. chapter 7; Zech. chapter 14; compare Matt. 6:10), will finally be completed.

Revelation 10:5 "And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,"

“Lifted up his hand to heaven”: This Greek verb appears often in the technical sense of raising the hand to take an oath or a solemn vow (compare Dan. 12:7; see notes on Matt. 5:33-34). The hand is raised toward heaven because that is where God dwells. The angel is taking an oath.

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Revelation 10:6 "And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:"

Time no longer. This literally means "delay no longer" and indicates that the time of the end is rapidly approaching. From the sounding of the seventh angel's trumpet, the world will move relentlessly toward the fulfillment of all the prophecies of the Bible, culminating in the coming of Christ to the earth.

This initiates the last plagues of the Day of the Lord (11:15), indicating that the time the disciples anticipated has come (Matt. 24:3; Acts 1:6). The prayers of the saints will be answered (6:9-11; Matt. 6:10).

Revelation 10:7 "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets."

“The mystery”: A Greek term meaning “to shut” or “to close”. In the new Testament, a “mystery” is a truth that God concealed but has revealed through Christ and His apostles (see notes on Eph. 3:4-5; compare Rom. 16:25). Here the mystery is the final consummation of all things as God destroys sinners and establishes His righteous kingdom on earth.

This is when Jesus reveals Himself to the Christians in heaven. The Bible says that when we get to heaven, we will recognize Him, because we will be like Him.

1 John 3:2 "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

You see this is a mystery to us now. When it is revealed, it will be so simple that we will think, "Why didn't I think of that?" It is not for us to know this right now.

This seventh trumpet means this is the final judgment. Throughout the New Testament, God spoke in parables so the world would not understand. Just those to whom Jesus would reveal Himself would understand.

“As he hath declared”: This mystery, though not fully revealed, was declared to God’s prophets (compare Amos 3:7).

Verses 8-10: John is told to “eat” the “little book”, and when he does, it becomes “sweet” in his “mouth” (compare Psalm 119:103; Jer. 15:16), but “bitter” in his “belly”. The act of eating represents the understanding and appropriation of prophetic revelation. The message is “sweet” because at last the kingdom promises are about to be fulfilled. It is bitter because it can only be accomplished through more judgment and tribulation.

Revelation 10:8 "And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go [and] take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth."

This is the third reference to the location of the angel who stands on the sea and earth. (Verses 2, 5 and 8). This emphasizes strongly the unusual authority he has over the earth.

Revelation 10:9 "And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take [it], and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey."

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This act graphically illustrates taking in God’s Word. John’s physical reactions demonstrate what every believer’s proper response to God’s judgment should be (compare Ezek. 3:1). Sweet anticipation of God’s glory and our victory, and at the same time, the bitterness of seeing God’s wrath poured out on those who reject His Son.

“Make thy belly bitter”: As he truly digests what the seal, trumpet, and vial judgments hold in store for the sinner, John becomes nauseated.

“In thy mouth sweet as honey”: But still God’s final victory and vindication are sweet realities to the believer.

In Ezekiel chapters 2 and 3, we see that physical Israel refused the New Testament and its teaching of Jesus. This sweetness is the beautiful message received, but the bitterness is the disappointment when they refuse the message. This bitterness is the terrible judgment, as well.

Revelation 10:10 "And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter."

The act of eating the book (scroll), symbolizes the absorbing and assimilating God's Holy Word, the Bible.

When John consumed the book, the words that were written were sweet as honey (very pleasing).

But for those who would be tormented in hell for the rest of eternity which was about to happen, John then tasted the bitterness as He knew God was about to take back the earth which was rightfully His, and be exalted, honored and glorified as He deserved. John realized the terrible punishment that was about to be given to unrepentant unbelievers and that caused the sweet taste to turn to bitterness.

Revelation 10:11 "And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings."

This verse is a key to the chronology of the Book of Revelation. John is told to "prophesy again" concerning (Greek *epi*, "about" or "concerning", not "before"), many "peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings". The seal and trumpet judgments have brought the chronology close to the end of the Tribulation period and to the return of Christ of the earth (compare 11:15). Now John must prophesy through the period a second time, concentrating this time on the major personages and movements of the Tribulation (e.g., Satan, the beasts, the harlot or Babylon system). This duplicated prophecy begins in chapter 12 and culminates in the vial (bowl), judgments, the destruction of the beast, and the return of Christ (chapters 16 to 19).

"Prophesy again": A call for John to warn men about the bitter judgment in the seventh trumpet and the 7 vials.

John is told he is to prophesy again. How could he prophesy any more than to write the book of Revelation (the gospel of John, and the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd books of John). Millions of people have read this prophecy, so John really did follow these instructions from God. The Bible is the most read book in the world.

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Revelation Chapter 10 Questions

1. How was this angel clothed?

2. What was upon His head?
3. What was His face like?
4. What were His feet like?
5. What is important to remember here?
6. Being clothed in a cloud shows _____?
7. What is the rainbow symbolic of?
8. Who was the covenant fulfilled through?
9. What did He have in his hand?
10. He set His right and left foot where? What does that show us?
11. What is the little book?
12. Why is it open?
13. Who was told to eat the book besides John?
14. Studying the Bible is more important than what?
15. Why should we eat the Word?
16. What did the voice sound like?
17. When He cried, how many thunders uttered their voices?
18. What was John told to seal up?
19. For who has Jesus made it possible to understand His parables?
20. Who did this being sworn by?
21. Explain time?
22. When shall the mystery of God be finished?
23. Who did He declare it to?
24. In 1 John, what do we find out about Jesus and us?
25. Who would understand?
26. Who was told to go and take the little book?

27. What was he to do with it?
28. What would it taste like?
29. What things do the bitterness mean?
30. What was John told to do in verse 11?
31. What is the most read book in the world?
32. Write your own explanation of the mystery of God that is finished here.